

July 7, 2015

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

To: Mayor and Members of City Council

From: Harry Black, City Manager **H B**

Subject: Arrest and Suspension of Police Powers of Three Cincinnati Police Officers

Resulting from an internal Cincinnati Police Department investigation, three Cincinnati Police officers have been arrested and had their police powers suspended pending the outcome of court proceedings, which are now underway. The investigation was initiated March 23, 2015, based on information received by the Internal Investigations Unit from Cincinnati Police Officers about an incident occurring in the early morning hours of March 22.

Incident Summary

On March 22, 2015, at approximately 5 am, Police Sergeant Andrew Mitchell of District Five was involved in a single-vehicle crash at 665 West McMicken Avenue while off duty and operating his personal vehicle. Police Officer Jason Cotterman of District Five responded to the scene to investigate the crash. Officer Cotterman completed a Vehicle Crash Report, and no charges were filed against Sergeant Mitchell on this date.

The following day, information was shared with the CPD Internal Investigation Unit. This information immediately initiated an investigation of this incident, which resulted in several outcomes described below.

Officer Cotterman and Sulfsted

On March 24, Sergeant Sulfsted, the supervisor on duty at the time of the incident, had his police powers suspended pending the investigation.

On May 1, Officer Cotterman's police powers were suspended.

On July 4, 2015, Officer Cotterman and Police Sergeant Richard Sulfsted of District Five, were each charged with two counts of Dereliction of Duty, Section 2921.44 Ohio Revised Code, a misdemeanor of the second degree, two counts of Obstructing Justice, Section 2921.32 Ohio Revised Code, a misdemeanor of the fourth degree, and two counts of Obstructing Justice, Section 2921.32 Ohio Revised Code, a minor misdemeanor, in relation to the manner in which

the investigation of Sergeant Mitchell's crash was handled on March 22, 2015. Officer Cotterman and Sergeant Sulfsted were each cited to appear in Hamilton County Municipal Court on July 16, 2015.

Officer Mitchell

On July 3, 2015, Sergeant Mitchell was charged with several violations in relation to the crash that occurred on March 22, 2015 including: Reckless Operation of a Vehicle, Section 506-6 Cincinnati Municipal Code, a misdemeanor of the fourth degree, Operation Without Reasonable Control of Vehicle, Section 4511.202 Ohio Revised Code, a minor misdemeanor, and Safety Belt Violation, Section 4513.263 (B)(1) Ohio Revised Code, a minor misdemeanor. Sergeant Mitchell was cited to appear in Hamilton County Municipal Court on July 10, 2015. Additionally on July 3, Officer Mitchell's police powers were suspended.

All three officers police powers will remain suspended pending the outcome of the Municipal Court proceedings and any resulting disciplinary action by the City.

Conclusion

This situation was quickly identified internally and is being dealt with in accordance with existing policies and procedures. Specifically, the charges were filed pursuant to an investigation by the Police Department's Internal Investigations Unit, as well as a review by the City of Cincinnati Prosecutor's Office.

I want to commend those involved for bringing this information to investigators and also the Internal Audit Unit, which has worked this case diligently with a high degree of professionalism over the last several months. We have over a thousand officers who keep us safe and secure and we appreciate the courageous work they do day in and day out.

I will continue to keep you apprised as the disciplinary process proceeds.

cc: Jeffrey Blackwell, Police Chief